SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS
12¢
STRANGE ADVENTURES
SEPT. NO. 144
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THOSE STRANGE PLANTS...EMITTING AN EERIE BLACKNESS THAT'S SPREADING OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH...
WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY THE PLANTS... BY BURNING THEM UP!
WE CANNOT ALLOW THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS TO DESTROY THE "SECRET WEAPON" WE ARE USING TO CONQUER THE EARTH!
AN AMAZING Atomic Knights ADVENTURE..
"WHEN THE EARTH BLACKED OUT!"

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The Atomic Knights

THIS FIGHT WILL DECIDE WHO CONTROLS THE EARTH--WE HUMANS OR THESE MOLE-CREATURES!

GARDNER GRAYLE--LEADER OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS.

DOUGLAS HERALD--SCHOOL TEACHER.

MARENE--HERALD'S SISTER.

BRYNDON--ONE OF THE LAST SCIENTISTS LEFT ALIVE ON EARTH.

WAYNE & HOLLIS HOBARD--BROTHERS, AND LOYAL ATOMIC KNIGHTS.

WHEREVER THE STRANGE FIGURES APPEARED, THE SUN VANISHED AND AN EERIE DARKNESS SPREAD OVER THE EARTH LIKE A BLIGHT! WHO WERE THE DREAD APPARITIONS? WHERE DID THEY COME FROM? THESE WERE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS HAD TO ANSWER...

WHEN the EARTH BLACKED OUT!

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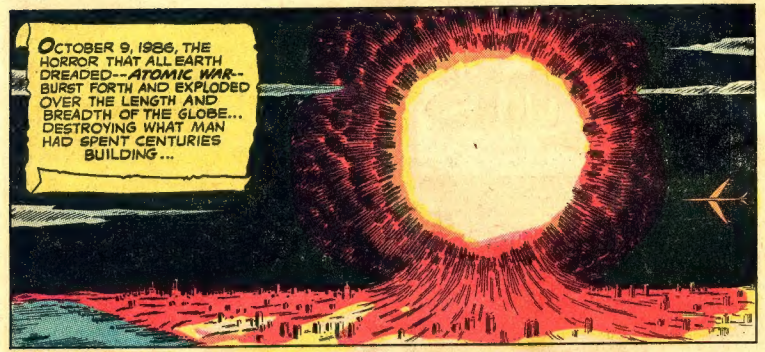
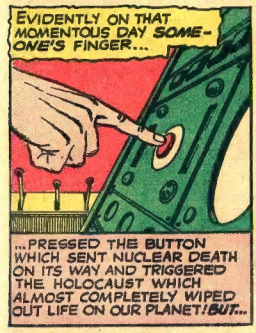
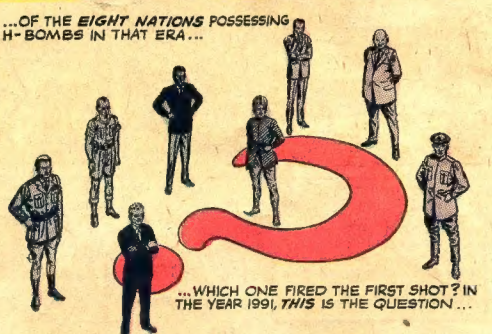
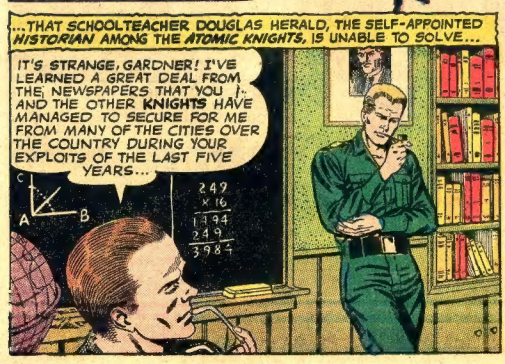

OCTOBER 9, 1986, THE HORROR THAT ALL EARTH DREADED--ATOMIC WAR--BURST FORTH AND EXPLODED OVER THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE GLOBE... DESTROYING WHAT MAN HAD SPENT CENTURIES BUILDING...


EVIDENTLY ON THAT MOMENTOUS DAY SOMEONE'S FINGER...
...PRESSED THE BUTTON WHICH SENT NUCLEAR DEATH ON ITS WAY AND TRIGGERED THE HOLOCAUST WHICH ALMOST COMPLETELY WIPED OUT LIFE ON OUR PLANET! BUT...


...OF THE EIGHT NATIONS POSSESSING H-BOMBS IN THAT ERA...
...WHICH ONE FIRED THE FIRST SHOT? IN THE YEAR 1991, THIS IS THE QUESTION...


...THAT SCHOOLTEACHER DOUGLAS HERALD, THE SELF-APPOINTED HISTORIAN AMONG THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS, IS UNABLE TO SOLVE...
IT'S STRANGE, GARDNER! I'VE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM THE NEWSPAPERS THAT YOU AND THE OTHER KNIGHTS HAVE MANAGED TO SECURE FOR ME FROM MANY OF THE CITIES OVER THE COUNTRY DURING YOUR EXPLOITS OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS...
C
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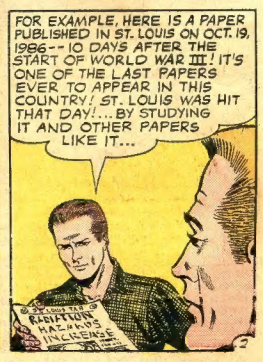
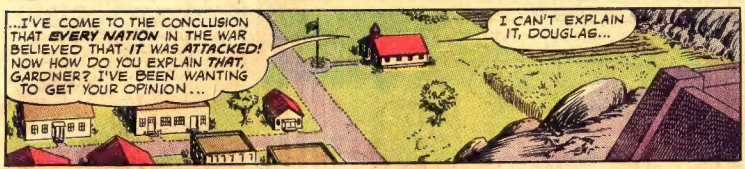
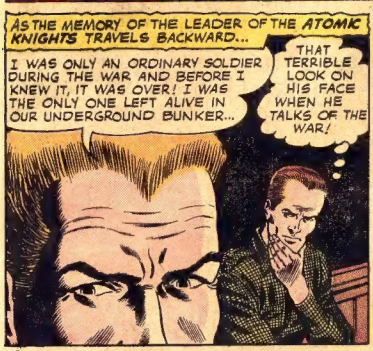
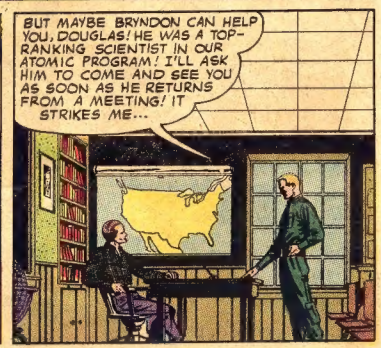
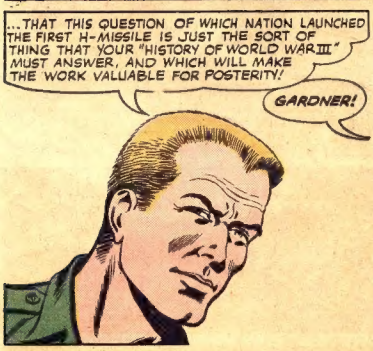
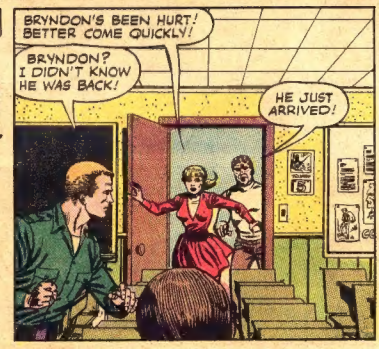

FOR EXAMPLE, HERE IS A PAPER PUBLISHED IN ST. LOUIS ON OCT. 19, 1986--10 DAYS AFTER THE START OF WORLD WAR III! IT'S ONE OF THE LAST PAPERS EVER TO APPEAR IN THIS COUNTRY! ST. LOUIS WAS HIT THAT DAY!... BY STUDYING IT AND OTHER PAPERS LIKE IT...
RADIATION HAZARDS INCREASE


...I'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT EVERY NATION IN THE WAR BELIEVED THAT IT WAS ATTACKED! NOW HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT, GARDNER? I'VE BEEN WANTING TO GET YOUR OPINION...
I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, DOUGLAS...

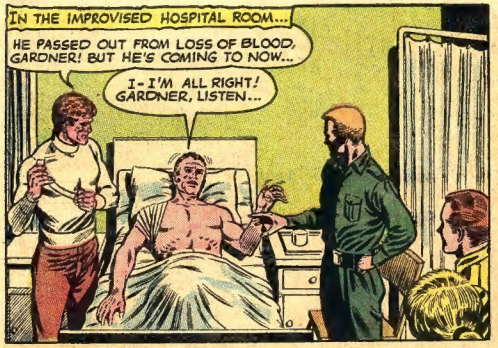

AS THE MEMORY OF THE LEADER OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS TRAVELS BACKWARD...
I WAS ONLY AN ORDINARY SOLDIER DURING THE WAR AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, IT WAS OVER! I WAS THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE IN OUR UNDERGROUND BUNKER...
THAT TERRIBLE LOOK ON HIS FACE WHEN HE TALKS OF THE WAR!


BUT MAYBE BRYNDON CAN HELP YOU, DOUGLAS! HE WAS A TOP-RANKING SCIENTIST IN OUR ATOMIC PROGRAM! I'LL ASK HIM TO COME AND SEE YOU AS SOON AS HE RETURNS FROM A MEETING! IT STRIKES ME...


...THAT THIS QUESTION OF WHICH NATION LAUNCHED THE FIRST H-MISSILE IS JUST THE SORT OF THING THAT YOUR "HISTORY OF WORLD WAR III" MUST ANSWER, AND WHICH WILL MAKE THE WORK VALUABLE FOR POSTERITY!
GARDNER!

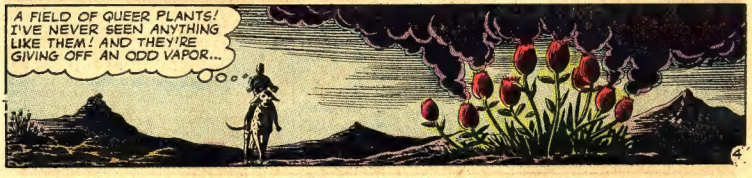

BRYNDON'S BEEN HURT! BETTER COME QUICKLY!
BRYNDON? I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS BACK!
HE JUST ARRIVED!

HE'S IN THE INFIRMARY!
DURVALE INFIRMARY
BRYNDON WENT OFF TO A MEETING OF SURVIVING SCIENTISTS--THE FIRST SINCE THE WAR! HE'S BEEN DUE BACK ALL DAY--BUT WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM?



"IT WAS ABOUT TWENTY MILES FROM HERE! I WAS ON MY WAY BACK TO **DURVALE** WHEN...

EDITOR'S NOTE: *SCIENTIST BRYNDON IS MOUNTED ON ONE OF THE* ***GIANT DOGS*** *DESCRIBED IN A PREVIOUS* ***ATOMIC KNIGHTS*** *STORY.*

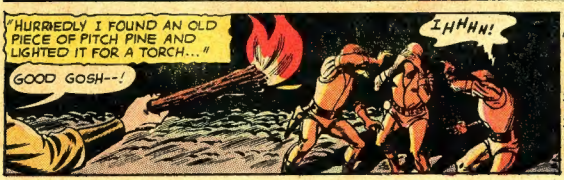


"AS I STARED UPWARD, THE TRUTH ABRUPTLY BECAME CLEAR..."
THE VAPOR FROM THE PLANTS IS RISING AND FORMING A HUGE CLOUD! BY JUPITER! THAT MUST BE THE CAUSE OF THE DARKNESS AROUND HERE--IT'S THESE PLANTS!

"SUDDENLY, WHILE I PAUSED THERE..."
THAT VEHICLE COMING ALONG--IT SEEMS TO BE CULTIVATING THIS PATCH! COULD IT BE THAT SEEDS WERE PLANTED HERE...?

HUH? THERE'S NO ONE AT ALL INSIDE THE VEHICLE! IT MUST BE REMOTELY CONTROLLED!

"I PRESSED ON! AND SURE ENOUGH, SOON AFTER..."
SHAPES--COMING OUT OF THE DARKNESS--CAN'T MAKE THEM OUT TOO WELL--!


"HURRIEDLY I FOUND AN OLD PIECE OF PITCH PINE AND LIGHTED IT FOR A TORCH..."
GOOD GOSH--!
IHHHH!
"WHAT I SAW IS HARD TO DESCRIBE--AND BELIEVE! THE CREATURES SEEMED VAGUELY HUMAN BUT MORE LIKE MOLES! THEIR EYES WERE MERE SLITS AND THEY SEEMED TO FLINCH FROM THE LIGHT CAST ON THEM!"

"THE NEXT MOMENT..."
SHOOTING AT ME-- HIT ME IN THE SHOULDER--
I REMEMBER THINKING THAT FOR CREATURES WITH PRACTICALLY NO EYES AT ALL THEIR AIM WAS REMARKABLY GOOD! THE SHOT WAS-- LIKE AN ENERGY-BURST! IT NEARLY KNOCKED ME TO THE GROUND...
"AND IT DID STAMPEDE MY MOUNT! THE DOG TOOK OFF LIKE AN ARROW! I BARELY MANAGED TO HANG ON..."
...DOG HEADING... IN RIGHT DIRECTION...! GOT TO KEEP FROM FALLING OFF!
THE DOG... INSTINCTIVELY... BROUGHT ME HERE...
ALL RIGHT! DON'T TALK ANYMORE, OLD BOY! REST-- SAVE YOUR STRENGTH! YOU'VE DONE ALL ANYONE COULD EXPECT!
WELL, GARDNER--?
WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT THOSE MOLE-CREATURES ARE UP TO! EVERYONE PUT ON FULL ARMOR-- IT SHOULD PROTECT US FROM THEIR ENERGY-BURSTS!
LEAVING MARENE BEHIND TO CARE FOR BRYNDON, THE REMAINING QUARTET OF KNIGHTS PREPARES FOR GRIM ACTION...
WE'LL RIDE DOUBLE! THE DOGS CAN CARRY US!
LET'S GO!

SOME TIME LATER...

LOOK! THE DARKNESS IS SPREADING--MOVING CLOSE TO **DURVALE** NOW! AND THOSE STRANGE SHRUBS GIVING OFF VAPOR--THEY SEEM TO BE SPRINGING UP EVERYWHERE!

WHAT WILL WE DO, GARDNER? THE CREATURES MAY BE IN THERE WAITING TO AMBUSH US IN THE DARKNESS!

VERY LIKELY, HOLLIS! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA...

USING MATCHES* FROM A PRECIOUS HOARD, THE LEADER OF THE **KNIGHTS** LIGHTS AN IMPROVISED TORCH...

LET'S SEE IF THESE QUEER SHRUBS WILL BURN! IF THEY DO, IT'S A WAY OF GETTING RID OF THEM--AND GIVING US LIGHT AT THE SAME TIME!

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** NO ARTICLES LIKE MATCHES HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE THE WAR ENDED FIVE YEARS AGO! ONLY THOSE PRESERVED STILL EXIST!

THEN...

TERRIFIC! THEY BURN ALL RIGHT, GARDNER!

SHH! YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

IHNHHI

THE NEXT MOMENT...

THE MOLE-CREATURES! THEY BLASTED THE SHRUB--DOUSED THE FIRE!

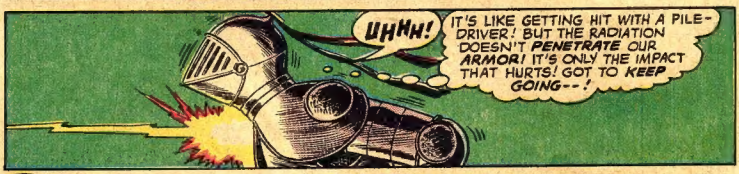
LET'S GO GET THEM!

BUT BEFORE THE ARMORED QUARTET CAN ADVANCE...

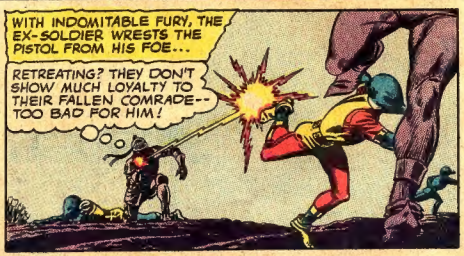
UHHH!

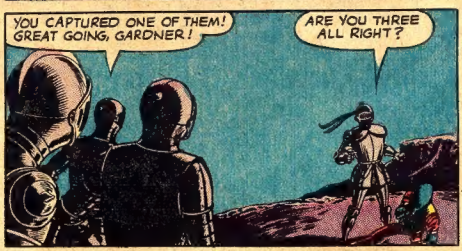
SPRAYING US WITH THEIR ENERGY-BURSTS! THEY'VE KNOCKED DOWN THE OTHERS--BUT SO FAR I HAVEN'T BEEN HIT--!

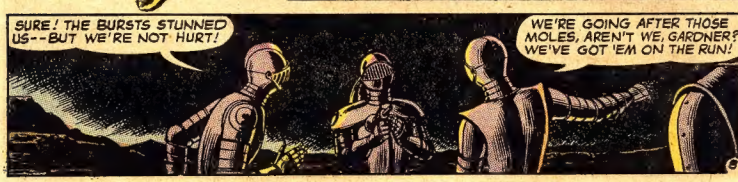
HEEDLESS OF HIS OWN SAFETY, GARDNER PLUNGES FORWARD IN A FRONTAL ATTACK...
BRYNDON WAS RIGHT! THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY CAN SEE ANYTHING--ESPECIALLY IN THIS DARKNESS! SO HOW CAN THEY AIM RIGHT AT US?


UHHH!
IT'S LIKE GETTING HIT WITH A PILE-DRIVER! BUT THE RADIATION DOESN'T PENETRATE OUR ARMOR! IT'S ONLY THE IMPACT THAT HURTS! GOT TO KEEP GOING--!

THEN...
GOT ONE OF THEM! NOW MAYBE I'LL HAVE A WEAPON--!


WITH INDOMITABLE FURY, THE EX-SOLDIER WRESTS THE PISTOL FROM HIS FOE...
RETREATING? THEY DON'T SHOW MUCH LOYALTY TO THEIR FALLEN COMRADE--TOO BAD FOR HIM!


YOU CAPTURED ONE OF THEM! GREAT GOING, GARDNER!
ARE YOU THREE ALL RIGHT?


SURE! THE BURSTS STUNNED US--BUT WE'RE NOT HURT!
WE'RE GOING AFTER THOSE MOLES, AREN'T WE, GARDNER? WE'VE GOT 'EM ON THE RUN!

NO, WE'VE ONLY GOT ONE WEAPON-- THEY MAY HAVE HUNDREDS! WE'VE GOT TO **FIND OUT** MORE ABOUT OUR ENEMIES BEFORE WE CAN DEFEAT THEM!

YOU MEAN--?

YES, I MEAN OUR PRISONER! SOMEHOW WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THIS CREATURE-- FIGURE OUT ITS LANGUAGE--

YOU WON'T-- HAVE TO FIGURE OUT...

IT SPEAKS **ENGLISH!**

OF COURSE... FOOLS! I'LL TELL YOU... ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW... BUT IT WON'T **HELP YOU!**

AS THE FOUR STARTLED **ATOMIC KNIGHTS** EXCHANGE WONDERING GLANCES...

LET'S GET BACK TO **DURVALE!** WE'LL DO OUR QUESTIONING THERE--AND SEE FOR OURSELVES WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL HELP US!

CHAPTER 2 FOLLOWS ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING...

ADVERTISEMENT

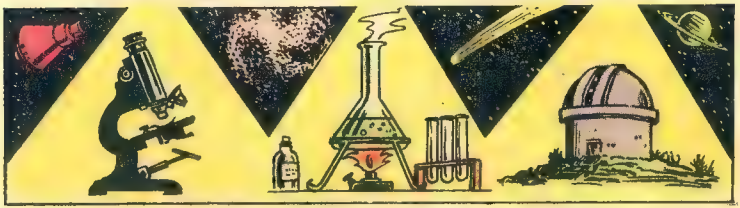
Tootsie Roll makes HISTORY!

When Washington crossed the Delaware,
We know he chose to stand
But the truth in the case;
He gave up this space
To keep Tootsie Rolls on hand!

AMERICA'S FAVORITE CANDY

Tootsie Roll

SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE



Dear Science Editor: On what basis do scientists theorize that the core of the Earth is of denser material than that found on the surface of the globe?

I.C., York, Pa.

Dear I.C.: The average weight of rocks on the Earth's surface is about 150 to 160 pounds per cubic foot. With the exception of a few metallic ores, none of the rocks weighs more than 200 pounds per cubic foot. Since it has been determined that the entire earth averages about 345 pounds per cubic foot, the central core of the world must be composed of material weighing much more than 345 pounds per cubic foot. Theories that the core is mainly iron or nickel are based on probable densities and also upon the fact that meteors, which may have originated in the same manner as the Earth, are largely composed of iron.

Science Editor

* * *

Dear Science Editor: Where in space is the point at which the gravity of the earth counterbalances the gravity of the moon?

N.K., Waco, Tex.

Dear N.K.: The "point" you refer to is known as the *neutral point,* and is a point on an imaginary line joining two celestial bodies at which their gravitational fields exactly balance each other. In the case of the Earth-Moon system, the point where the gravitational pull of the Moon equals that of the Earth is at a point nine-tenths from the Earth to the Moon.

Science Editor

* * *

Dear Science Editor: Since it has not as yet been determined that the ring formations on the moon are due to volcanic action, is it really correct to refer to them as craters?

V.M., Hammond, Ind.

Dear V.M.: Astronomers who choose their words carefully refer to these lunar formations as *walled plains* or *cirques.*

Science Editor

* * *

Dear Science Editor: What is meant by complementary colors?

Dear L.A.: Complementary colors are those pairs of colors which when mixed produce white or gray light—for example, red and blue-green; green-yellow and violet; yellow and indigo-blue. In pigments, those opposite colors which when mixed produce a neutral gray—for example, blue is complementary to yellow-red; yellow is the complement of purple-blue; red is the complement of blue-green.

* * *

Dear Science Editor: What does the spectrum of a star tell us?

M.P., Norwich, Conn.

Dear M.P.: From an examination of a stellar spectrum we can primarily determine the chemical elements that make up the body of the star. In addition, the spectrum enables us to know whether the star is in a solid, liquid or gaseous state, and whether it is under compression. Moreover, we can determine whether a star is moving away from us or toward us; it is even possible to calculate the approximate speed with which the star is approaching us or receding from us.

Science Editor

KRYPTON, the world where SUPERMAN was born, LIVES AGAIN!

IN THIS SENSATIONAL *ALL-KRYPTON ALBUM!*... SELECTED FROM HUNDREDS OF PAST ISSUES, THESE STAR STORIES REVEAL THE INNERMOST SECRETS OF THE **SUPERMAN** FAMILY BEFORE *KRYPTON* PERISHED! YOU HAVE A DATE WITH THIS MIGHTY SUPER-RACE IN THE NEXT...

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The Atomic Knights

WHEN the EARTH BLACKED OUT!

CHAPTER 2

SHORTLY, BACK IN DURVALE, AFTER THE KNIGHTS--INCLUDING BRYNDON, ONCE MORE ON HIS FEET--HAVE LEARNED SOME ASTONISHING THINGS ABOUT THEIR STRANGE, NEAR-BLIND FOES...

THEY COME FROM INSIDE THE EARTH--

WHERE THEY'VE BEEN PLOTTING THIS INVASION OF THE SURFACE FOR DECADES--!

THEY CAN'T STAND LIGHT! THAT'S WHY THEY'RE MAKING THE ENTIRE EARTH DARK--SO THEY CAN EXIST HERE AS THE RULING RACE!

YET THEY CAN "SEE"--BY MEANS OF THEIR SENSITIVITY TO INFRA-RED RAYS--THAT ARE INVISIBLE TO US!

AND NATURALLY THEY LEARNED OUR LANGUAGE! THEY'VE BEEN SPYING ON US FOR YEARS--PREPARING THIS COUP! THE WAR FIVE YEARS AGO GAVE THEM THEIR CHANCE... BUT THEY WAITED TILL THE RADIATION DIED DOWN TO START THEIR CONQUEST!

LISTEN...

OUR KI-MOLI--THE DARKNESS-CREATING PLANTS WE BRED--WILL SOON COVER THE EARTH COMPLETELY! THEN IT WILL ALWAYS BE NIGHT HERE... AND IT WILL BE OUR PLANET!

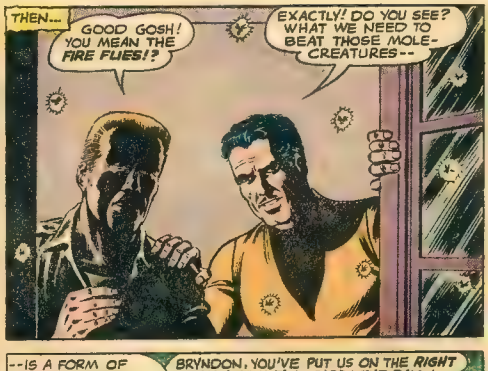
HE SOUNDS PRETTY CONFIDENT!

MAYBE HE HAS A RIGHT TO BE, HOLLIS! WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO OPPOSE THEIR ENERGY-GUNS WITH?

THEY CAN'T STAND LIGHT ... THAT'S THE ONE BIG ADVANTAGE WE HAVE OVER THEM! BUT...

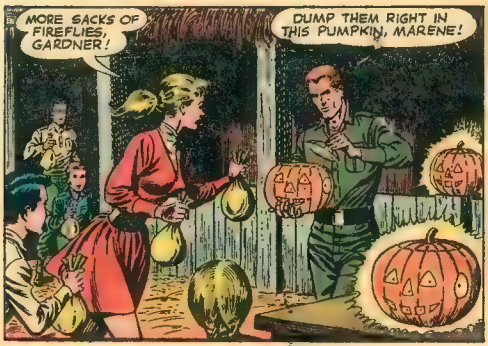
...HOW CAN WE USE THAT ADVANTAGE? IF WE TRY TO ATTACK THEM WE NEED LIGHT TO SEE BY--AND ANY LIGHT GIVES OFF HEAT--SO THEY'LL BE ABLE TO DETECT OUR PRESENCE AT ONCE AND BLAST US! IT...

WAIT A MINUTE!



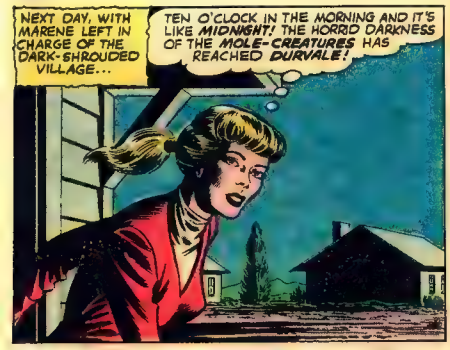
UNDER THE DRIVING LEADERSHIP OF GARDNER GRAYLE, THE ENTIRE TOWN OF DURVALE IS PUT TO WORK...

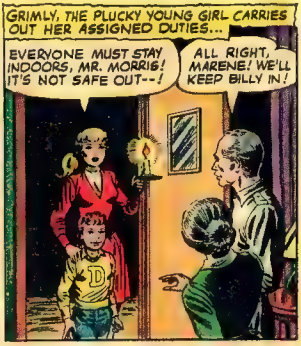
*EDITOR'S NOTE: ALTHOUGH ALL PLANTS AND ANIMALS WERE DESTROYED BY THE TERRIBLE RADIATION WAR OF 1986, CERTAIN HARDY, TINY INSECTS, LIKE FIREFLIES, ESCAPED UNSCATHED!

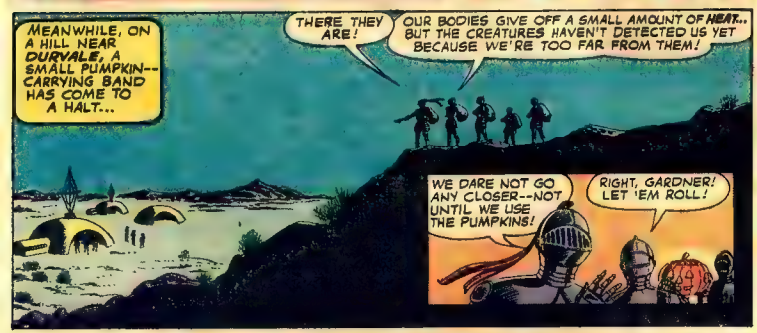


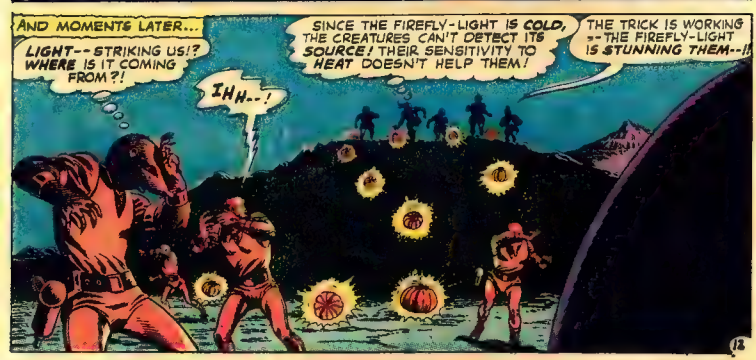
AND, AS THE NIGHT WEARS ON, A COLLECTION OF STRANGE WEAPONS TAKES SHAPE IN THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS...

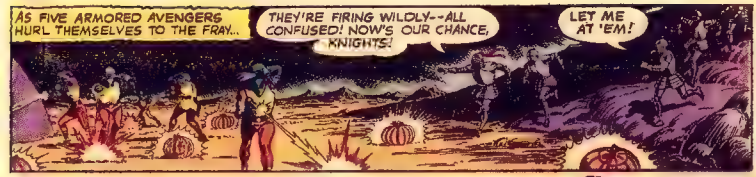
...FIREFLY-FILLED PUMPKINS, TAKEN FROM THE VEGETABLE GARDEN OF DURVALE, ONE OF THE FIRST PATCHES ON EARTH TO BE CLEANSED OF KILLING RADIATION AND MADE READY FOR NEW GROWTH!

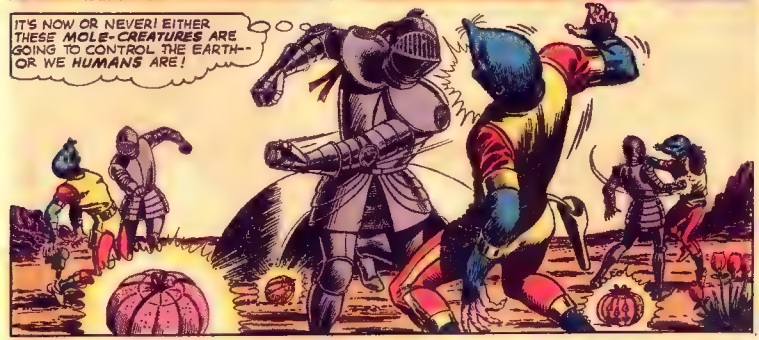

NEXT DAY, WITH MARENE LEFT IN CHARGE OF THE DARK-SHROUDED VILLAGE...
TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING AND IT'S LIKE MIDNIGHT! THE HORRID DARKNESS OF THE MOLE-CREATURES HAS REACHED DURVALE!

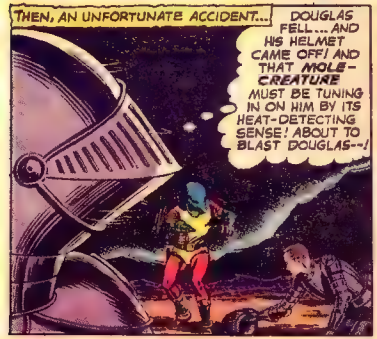

GRIMLY, THE PLUCKY YOUNG GIRL CARRIES OUT HER ASSIGNED DUTIES...
EVERYONE MUST STAY INDOORS, MR. MORRIS! IT'S NOT SAFE OUT--!
ALL RIGHT, MARENE! WE'LL KEEP BILLY IN!

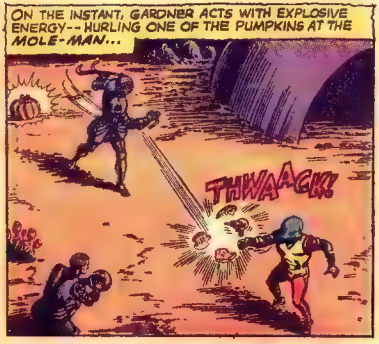

MEANWHILE, ON A HILL NEAR DURVALE, A SMALL PUMPKIN--CARRYING BAND HAS COME TO A HALT...
THERE THEY ARE!
OUR BODIES GIVE OFF A SMALL AMOUNT OF HEAT.. BUT THE CREATURES HAVEN'T DETECTED US YET BECAUSE WE'RE TOO FAR FROM THEM!
WE DARE NOT GO ANY CLOSER--NOT UNTIL WE USE THE PUMPKINS!
RIGHT, GARDNER! LET 'EM ROLL!

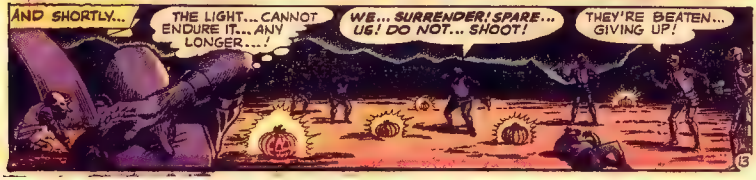

AND MOMENTS LATER...
LIGHT--STRIKING US!? WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?!
IHH--!
SINCE THE FIREFLY-LIGHT IS COLD, THE CREATURES CAN'T DETECT ITS SOURCE! THEIR SENSITIVITY TO HEAT DOESN'T HELP THEM!
THE TRICK IS WORKING --THE FIREFLY-LIGHT IS STUNNING THEM--!


AS FIVE ARMORED AVENGERS HURL THEMSELVES TO THE FRAY...
THEY'RE FIRING WILDLY--ALL CONFUSED! NOW'S OUR CHANCE, KNIGHTS!
LET ME AT 'EM!


IT'S NOW OR NEVER! EITHER THESE MOLE-CREATURES ARE GOING TO CONTROL THE EARTH--OR WE HUMANS ARE!


THEN, AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT...
DOUGLAS FELL... AND HIS HELMET CAME OFF! AND THAT MOLE-CREATURE MUST BE TUNING IN ON HIM BY ITS HEAT-DETECTING SENSE! ABOUT TO BLAST DOUGLAS--!


ON THE INSTANT, GARDNER ACTS WITH EXPLOSIVE ENERGY--HURLING ONE OF THE PUMPKINS AT THE MOLE-MAN...
THWAACK!


AND SHORTLY...
THE LIGHT... CANNOT ENDURE IT... ANY LONGER....!
WE... SURRENDER! SPARE... US! DO NOT... SHOOT!
THEY'RE BEATEN... GIVING UP!

LATER, AFTER A FORCED MARCH TO A NEARBY RIFT IN THE EARTH...
THE MOLE-INVADERS CAME UP OUT OF THIS CREVICE IN THE EARTH--AND NOW THEY'RE GOING BACK INTO IT, BACK DOWN WHERE THEY BELONG!
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL EVER COME UP AND TRY TO CONQUER THE SURFACE AGAIN, GARDNER!
BECAUSE THEY KNOW NOW THAT WE HAVE THE ONE WEAPON THAT CAN ALWAYS BEAT THEM--COLD LIGHT!
THANKS TO THE FIRE-FLIES!
AND THEN..
BURNING THESE STRANGE SHRUBS SURE SETS OFF A LOT OF SMOKE! WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL IF WE'VE MADE ANY HEADWAY AGAINST THE DARKNESS UNTIL THE SMOKE CLEARS!
AS SUSPENSE RISES... ALONG WITH THE CLOUDS OF SMOKE...
HOORAY! THE SUN--!!
BOY, IT NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD! THE DARKNESS IS DISAPPEARING FAST--!
AND WITH THE FIGHT BEHIND THEM... DOUGLAS REVEALS A STARTLING BIT OF NEWS...
...AND BEFORE WE SENT OUR PRISONER BELOW-GROUND WITH THE OTHERS OF HIS MOLE-RACE, I HAD A CHANCE TO QUESTION HIM AGAIN AND I OBTAINED AN AMAZING CONFESSION!
"FIVE YEARS AGO ON OCTOBER 20, 1986, THE MOLE-CREATURES SENT A POWERFUL ENERGY-PULSE UP FROM THEIR UNDERGROUND DWELLING..."
FROM NOW ON IT SHOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE WE CAN TAKE OVER THE SURFACE OF THIS PLANET! WE NEED ROOM FOR OUR RACE TO EXPAND!

"THE ENERGY-PACKET FLEW UNERRINGLY AND IN SPLIT-MOMENTS TO A BUTTON IN A SECRET WAR-ROOM BEHIND MANY FEET OF CONCRETE..."

"...A BUTTON TRIGGERED TO SEND SCORES OF H-MISSILES ACROSS THE EARTH!"

AND JUST ABOUT FIVE MINUTES LATER, WORLD WAR III WAS UNDERWAY..."

THEN IT WAS THE MOLE-CREATURES WHO STARTED WORLD WAR III--AND NOT ANY ONE OF THE NATIONS ON EARTH?

THAT'S RIGHT, GARDNER! BUT WE HUMANS STILL CANNOT ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY!

WE MADE THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH AN ARMED CAMP--A GLOBAL TINDER BOX! THE MOLE-CREATURES PROVIDED ONLY THE SPARK THAT SET OFF THE DREADFUL HOLOCAUST!

THAT'S TRUE--SO TRUE!

GARDNER! IT'S DAY AGAIN!

THIS TIME IT MUST BE A NEW DAY! NEVER AGAIN MUST NATIONS BE READY TO DESTROY EACH OTHER ON THIS WONDERFUL WORLD!

15

THE END.

WATCH FOR ANOTHER ATOMIC KNIGHTS ADVENTURE IN A FORTHCOMING STRANGE ADVENTURES.

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SPOTLIGHT ON STRANGE ADVENTURES

Dear Editor: The cover of the May *Strange Adventures* was one that could not be ignored; the title-logo was striking with that unusual red-purple combination. I assume Murphy Anderson should get the credit for the superb cover.

"Prisoner of the Space-Patch"—good show! A unique plot supplemented with the detailed drawing of Mr. Anderson made it a story I won't forget for some time.

"The Case of the Worn-Out Robot"—not spectacular, but good nonetheless. I find myself enjoying the *Star Hawkins* stories more and more. The robot *Ilda* adds an original touch to the series. Incidentally, what is the name of its competent artist?

"The Strange Adventure that Really Happened"—to state this story was spectacular would be a gross understatement! This tale is likened to no other in comic history; its daring is to be envied! The story-line was well-worn, yet this narrative was refreshingly different. Why my enthusiasm for it? The characters are real people who actually make every wonderful issue of *SA* possible. Artist Sid Greene's seeming disgust at becoming a science-fiction artist appealed to my sense of humor. The fact that the story was narrated in the first person added an unusual flavor. The "red herring" clue at the end was tricky but neat.

Melvin Herbers, 225 Gates Ave., Elyria, O.

(Every Strange Adventures *cover from the August, 1961 issue on has been the work of Murphy Anderson—and anticipating queries as to who did the previous July, 1961 cover (illustrating "War With the Giant Frogs"), it was Sid Greene. Artists Mike Sekowsky and Bernie Sachs collaborate on the* Star Hawkins *stories.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: I am sick and tired of reading all those rave letters about the *Atomic Knights* and *Space Museum* series. I am writing this letter to let you know I favor the *Star Hawkins* stories. You've done a great job on them and I'd like to see them continued.

Danny Lasse, 240 W. Summit, Alliance, O.

(Continue they will—for we believe the Star Hawkins *stories offer a much-needed* comic *relief from serious science-fiction.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: For just pure downright entertainment I don't believe I've read anything quite like "The Strange Adventure that Really Happened." It was a delightful farce. Whoever is behind this story (and I suspect that it is those pixies Gardner Fox and Julius Schwartz) surely deserves all the congratulations that can be bestowed on him—or if the case be, them. I was glad to see what some of the people behind the great DC Comics look like. I'd like to see a follow-up on this story sometime—and once again have the staff play an integral part in it.

Paul Seydor, RD 1, Imperial, Pa.

(Sometimes a gag story loses its punch when repeated—but should another menace pop up to challenge this dauntless duo again, you may be sure they'll be well-armed with a typewriter to "key" it into submission!—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: "Prisoner of the Space-Patch" suffered from the standard plot of too many of your stories—menace, solved by the hero at the last minute. Why should Morton be the one to solve the problem which all the people of the earth and all the great scientists of a super-race are trying to solve? Don't you think our hero coming through at the last minute is just a bit too much of a coincidence?

"The Strange Adventure that Really Happened" was a spectacular story. The artist especially did some fabulous cartooning. I do have a reservation about the plot (outside of the aforementioned one that earth is saved at the last critical moment): I think it's unlikely that the Pentagon would believe a call from a comic book editor. It would have been more realistic if Editor Schwartz and Writer Fox had been forced to dash like mad out to Carson Woods and had finished off the Inhali-Scope by themselves.

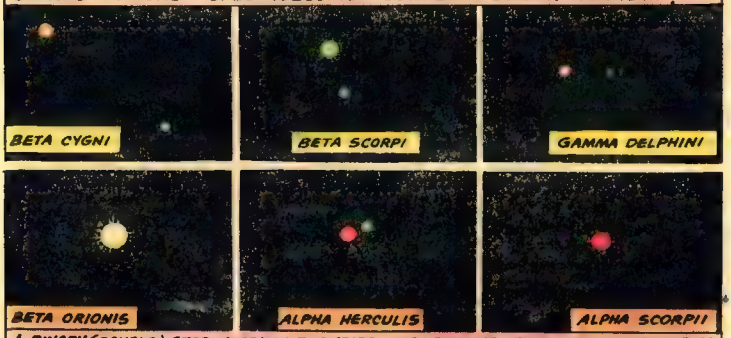
Rock Wood, Memphis, Tenn.

(You may have a point there about that call to the Pentagon—for if the situation were reversed and the Pentagon called us, *we wouldn't believe it either! As for Schwartz and Fox dashing like mad to smash the Inhali-Scope on their own—rather than leave that chore to the Army—that would have been an* unrealistic *touch to an otherwise* realistic *story.*—Editor)

Letters to this department should be addressed to: SPOTLIGHT ON STRANGE ADVENTURES, National Periodical Publications, 575 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN--

OPTICAL -- VISUAL -- SPECTROSCOPIC -- ECLIPSING BINARY STARS... 2



A **BINARY (DOUBLE) STAR** IS REALLY TWO STARS WHICH REVOLVE ABOUT A COMMON CENTER OF GRAVITY. WHEN THE STAR-SEPARATION CAN BE SEEN WITH THE NAKED EYE, IT IS AN **OPTICAL BINARY**; A **VISUAL BINARY** CAN ONLY BE OBSERVED WITH A TELESCOPE. WHEN DETECTED ONLY WITH A SPECTROSCOPE, IT IS CALLED A **SPECTROSCOPIC BINARY**; AN **ECLIPSING BINARY** IS DETECTED ONLY BY THE RELATED STARS' RHYTHMICAL FLUCTUATION IN BRIGHTNESS...

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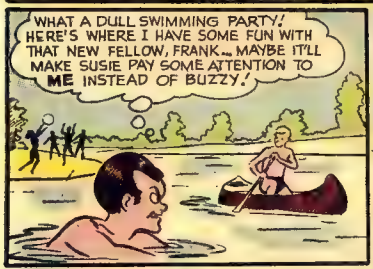
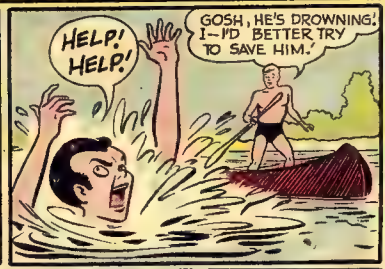
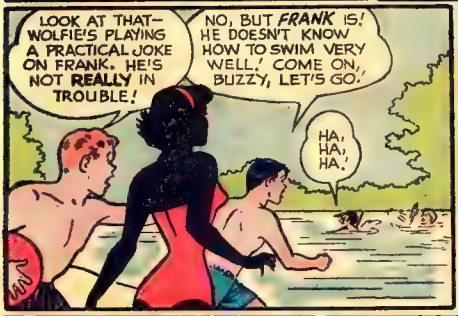
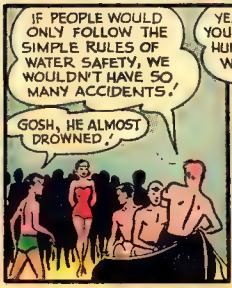
BOATING

DON'T OVERLOAD THE BOAT. DON'T CHANGE PLACES OR ROCK THE BOAT. DON'T GO WITHOUT LIFE PRESERVERS OR SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO SWIM.



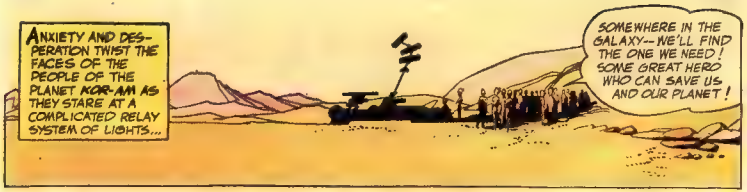


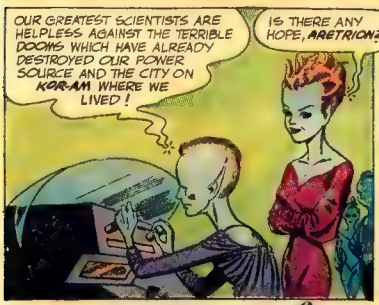


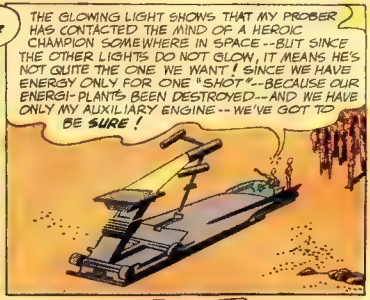


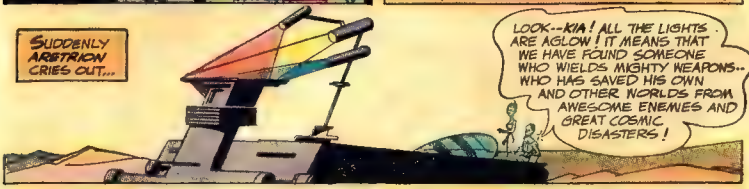
PUBLISHED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE ASSEMBLY, COORDINATING ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL HEALTH, WELFARE AND RECREATION AGENCIES OF THE U. S.

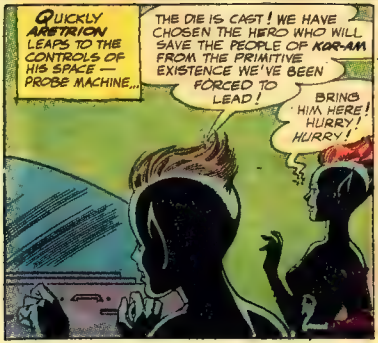
ONLY A YOUNG EARTH BOY COULD SEE WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING ON THE PLANET KOR-AM! AND UNLESS HE COULD CONVINCE THE PEOPLE OF THAT PLANET THAT THEY MUSTN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEIR EYES WERE SEEING--THEY WOULD SUFFER A TERRIBLE FATE!
THE IMAGINARY DOOMS!
UNLESS I CAN PROVE TO THESE PEOPLE OF KOR-AM THAT THIS "FIREBALL DOOM" IS PURELY IMAGINARY--THEY'LL REALLY BE DOOMED!

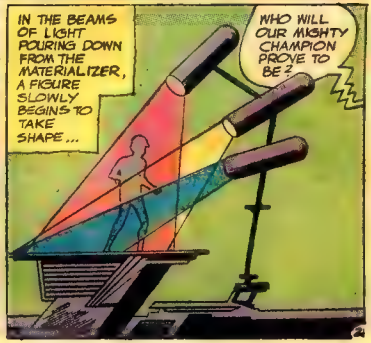

ANXIETY AND DESPERATION TWIST THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE PLANET KOR-AM AS THEY STARE AT A COMPLICATED RELAY SYSTEM OF LIGHTS...
SOMEWHERE IN THE GALAXY--WE'LL FIND THE ONE WE NEED! SOME GREAT HERO WHO CAN SAVE US AND OUR PLANET!


OUR GREATEST SCIENTISTS ARE HELPLESS AGAINST THE TERRIBLE DOOMS WHICH HAVE ALREADY DESTROYED OUR POWER SOURCE AND THE CITY ON KOR-AM WHERE WE LIVED!
IS THERE ANY HOPE, ARETRION?

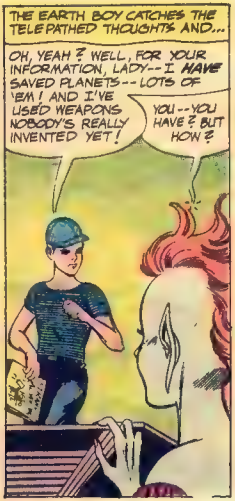

THE GLOWING LIGHT SHOWS THAT MY PROBER HAS CONTACTED THE MIND OF A HEROIC CHAMPION SOMEWHERE IN SPACE--BUT SINCE THE OTHER LIGHTS DO NOT GLOW, IT MEANS HE'S NOT QUITE THE ONE WE WANT! SINCE WE HAVE ENERGY ONLY FOR ONE "SHOT"--BECAUSE OUR ENERGI-PLANTS BEEN DESTROYED--AND WE HAVE ONLY MY AUXILIARY ENGINE--WE'VE GOT TO BE SURE!


SUDDENLY ARETRION CRIES OUT...
LOOK--KIA! ALL THE LIGHTS ARE AGLOW! IT MEANS THAT WE HAVE FOUND SOMEONE WHO WIELDS MIGHTY WEAPONS--WHO HAS SAVED HIS OWN AND OTHER WORLDS FROM AWESOME ENEMIES AND GREAT COSMIC DISASTERS!

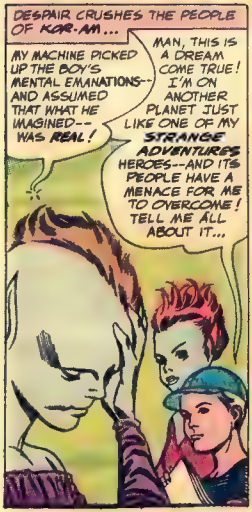

QUICKLY ARETRION LEAPS TO THE CONTROLS OF HIS SPACE — PROBE MACHINE...
THE DIE IS CAST! WE HAVE CHOSEN THE HERO WHO WILL SAVE THE PEOPLE OF KOR-AM FROM THE PRIMITIVE EXISTENCE WE'VE BEEN FORCED TO LEAD!
BRING HIM HERE! HURRY! HURRY!

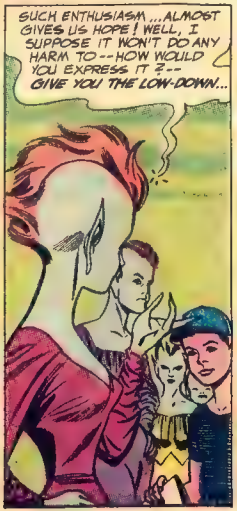

IN THE BEAMS OF LIGHT POURING DOWN FROM THE MATERIALIZER, A FIGURE SLOWLY BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE...
WHO WILL OUR MIGHTY CHAMPION PROVE TO BE?

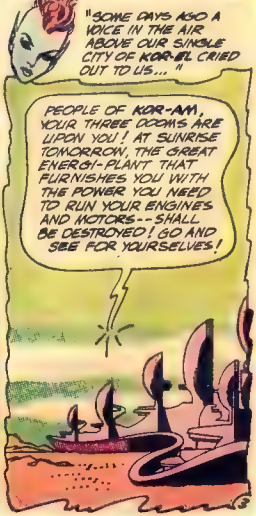
MOMENTS LATER...
HEY, WHERE AM I?
WHY, IT'S ONLY A YOUNGSTER! ARETRION--SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE WRONG WITH YOUR INVENTION! NO CHILD COULD HAVE SAVED PLANETS AND USED GREAT WEAPONS!

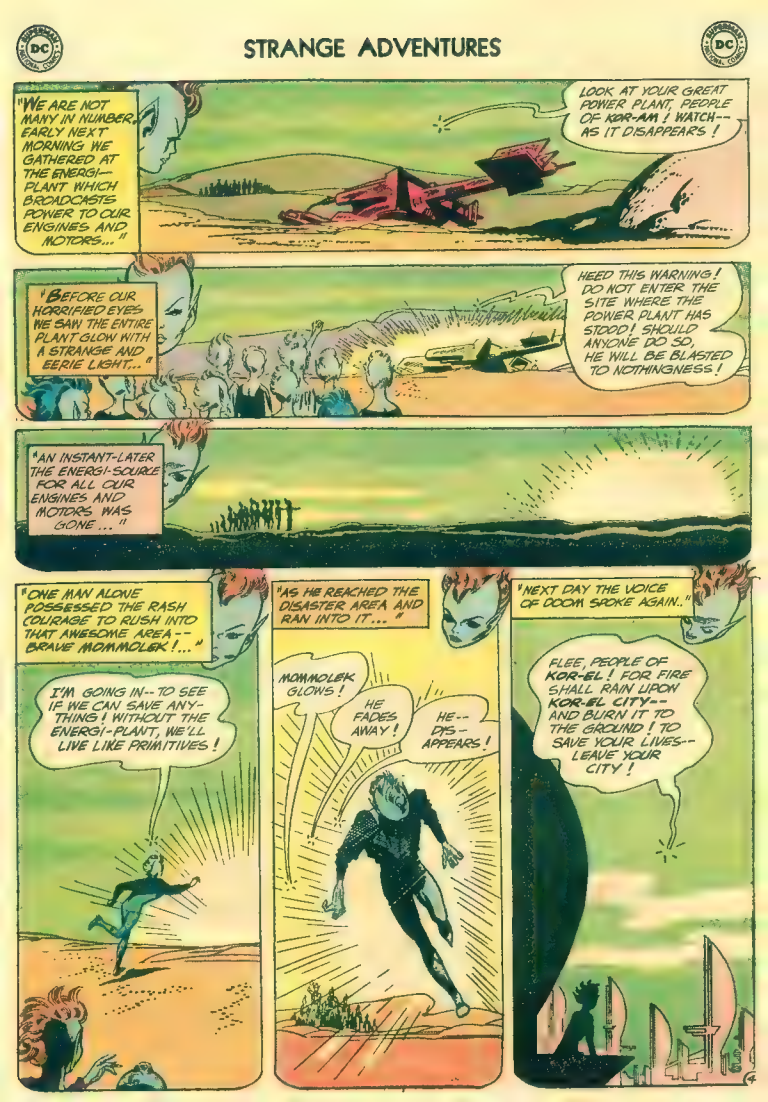

THE EARTH BOY CATCHES THE TELEPATHED THOUGHTS AND...
OH, YEAH? WELL, FOR YOUR INFORMATION, LADY--I HAVE SAVED PLANETS--LOTS OF 'EM! AND I'VE USED WEAPONS NOBODY'S REALLY INVENTED YET!
YOU--YOU HAVE? BUT HOW?

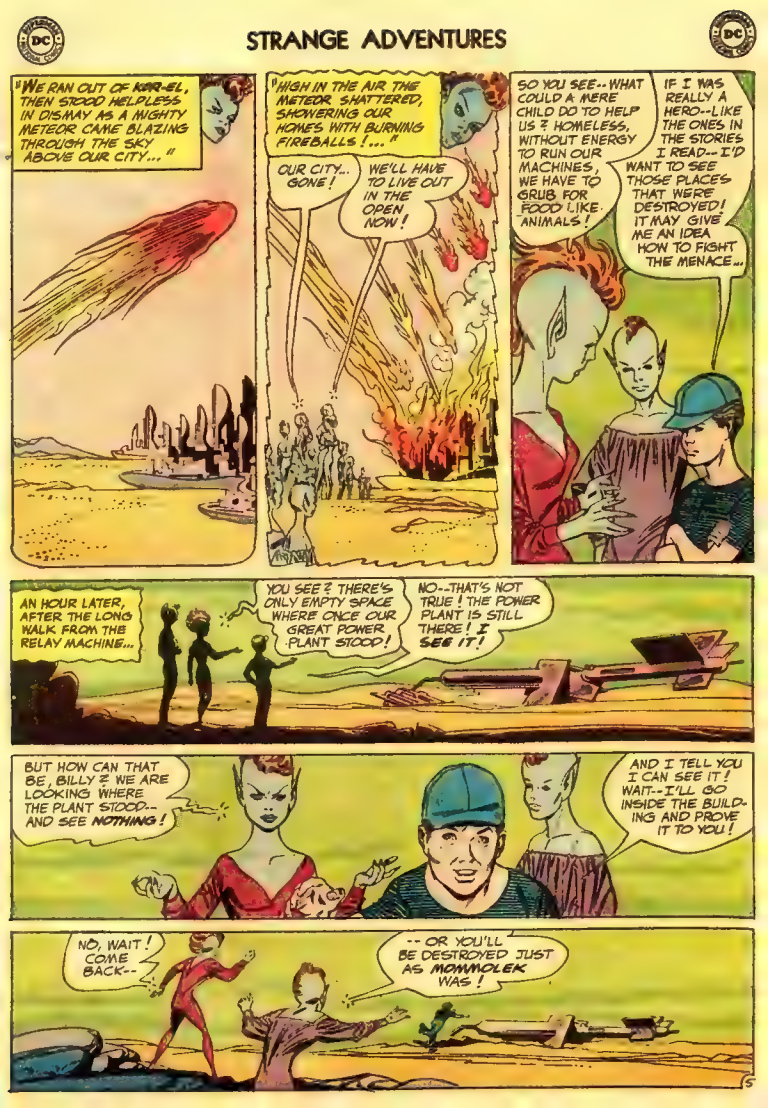
I READ ALL THE SCIENCE FICTION I CAN LAY MY HANDS ON--LIKE THIS ISSUE OF STRANGE ADVENTURES I HAVE WITH ME! FIRST--I READ--THEN I ACT OUT THE STORIES! I REALLY LIVE THEM--IN MY MIND!

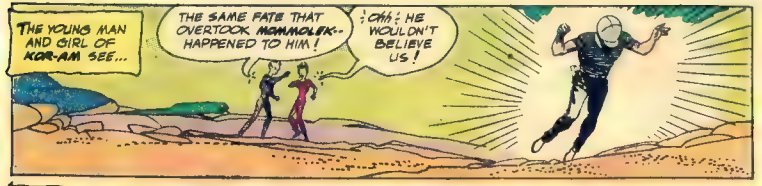

DESPAIR CRUSHES THE PEOPLE OF KOR-AM...
MY MACHINE PICKED UP THE BOY'S MENTAL EMANATIONS--AND ASSUMED THAT WHAT HE IMAGINED--WAS REAL!
MAN, THIS IS A DREAM COME TRUE! I'M ON ANOTHER PLANET JUST LIKE ONE OF MY STRANGE ADVENTURES HEROES--AND ITS PEOPLE HAVE A MENACE FOR ME TO OVERCOME! TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT...

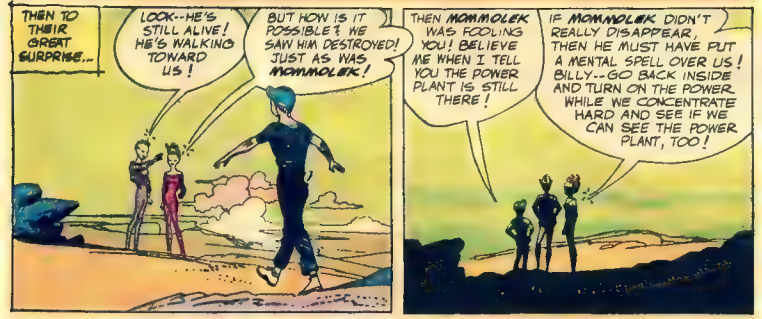

SUCH ENTHUSIASM...ALMOST GIVES US HOPE! WELL, I SUPPOSE IT WON'T DO ANY HARM TO--HOW WOULD YOU EXPRESS IT?--GIVE YOU THE LOW-DOWN...

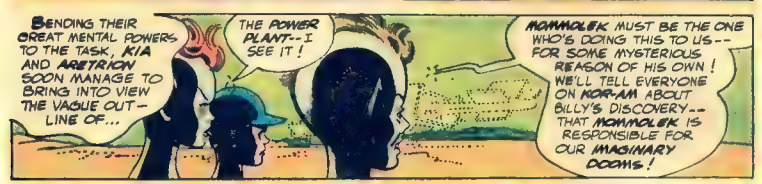

"SOME DAYS AGO A VOICE IN THE AIR ABOVE OUR SINGLE CITY OF KOR-AL CRIED OUT TO US..."
PEOPLE OF KOR-AM, YOUR THREE DOOMS ARE UPON YOU! AT SUNRISE TOMORROW, THE GREAT ENERGY-PLANT THAT FURNISHES YOU WITH THE POWER YOU NEED TO RUN YOUR ENGINES AND MOTORS--SHALL BE DESTROYED! GO AND SEE FOR YOURSELVES!

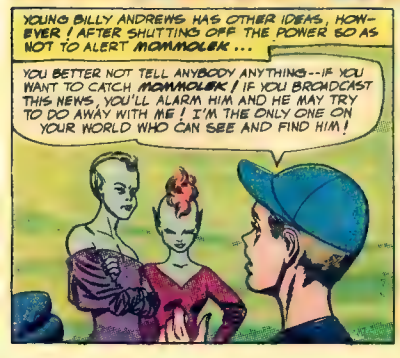

"WE ARE NOT MANY IN NUMBER. EARLY NEXT MORNING WE GATHERED AT THE ENERGI-PLANT WHICH BROADCASTS POWER TO OUR ENGINES AND MOTORS..."
LOOK AT YOUR GREAT POWER PLANT, PEOPLE OF KOR-AM! WATCH--AS IT DISAPPEARS!
"BEFORE OUR HORRIFIED EYES WE SAW THE ENTIRE PLANT GLOW WITH A STRANGE AND EERIE LIGHT..."
HEED THIS WARNING! DO NOT ENTER THE SITE WHERE THE POWER PLANT HAS STOOD! SHOULD ANYONE DO SO, HE WILL BE BLASTED TO NOTHINGNESS!
"AN INSTANT-LATER THE ENERGI-SOURCE FOR ALL OUR ENGINES AND MOTORS WAS GONE..."
"ONE MAN ALONE POSSESSED THE RASH COURAGE TO RUSH INTO THAT AWESOME AREA--BRAVE MOMMOLEK!..."
I'M GOING IN--TO SEE IF WE CAN SAVE ANYTHING! WITHOUT THE ENERGI-PLANT, WE'LL LIVE LIKE PRIMITIVES!
"AS HE REACHED THE DISASTER AREA AND RAN INTO IT..."
MOMMOLEK GLOWS!
HE FADES AWAY!
HE--DIS--APPEARS!
"NEXT DAY THE VOICE OF DOOM SPOKE AGAIN.."
FLEE, PEOPLE OF KOR-EL! FOR FIRE SHALL RAIN UPON KOR-EL CITY--AND BURN IT TO THE GROUND! TO SAVE YOUR LIVES--LEAVE YOUR CITY!


"WE RAN OUT OF KRR-EL, THEN STOOD HELPLESS IN DISMAY AS A MIGHTY METEOR CAME BLAZING THROUGH THE SKY ABOVE OUR CITY..."
"HIGH IN THE AIR THE METEOR SHATTERED, SHOWERING OUR HOMES WITH BURNING FIREBALLS!..."
OUR CITY... GONE!
WE'LL HAVE TO LIVE OUT IN THE OPEN NOW!
SO YOU SEE--WHAT COULD A MERE CHILD DO TO HELP US? HOMELESS, WITHOUT ENERGY TO RUN OUR MACHINES, WE HAVE TO GRUB FOR FOOD LIKE ANIMALS!
IF I WAS REALLY A HERO--LIKE THE ONES IN THE STORIES I READ--I'D WANT TO SEE THOSE PLACES THAT WERE DESTROYED! IT MAY GIVE ME AN IDEA HOW TO FIGHT THE MENACE...
AN HOUR LATER, AFTER THE LONG WALK FROM THE RELAY MACHINE...
YOU SEE? THERE'S ONLY EMPTY SPACE WHERE ONCE OUR GREAT POWER PLANT STOOD!
NO--THAT'S NOT TRUE! THE POWER PLANT IS STILL THERE! I SEE IT!
BUT HOW CAN THAT BE, BILLY? WE ARE LOOKING WHERE THE PLANT STOOD--AND SEE NOTHING!
AND I TELL YOU I CAN SEE IT! WAIT--I'LL GO INSIDE THE BUILDING AND PROVE IT TO YOU!
NO, WAIT! COME BACK--
--OR YOU'LL BE DESTROYED JUST AS MONMOLEK WAS!


THE YOUNG MAN AND GIRL OF KOR-AM SEE...
THE SAME FATE THAT OVERTOOK MOMMOLEK-- HAPPENED TO HIM!
OH! HE WOULDN'T BELIEVE US!

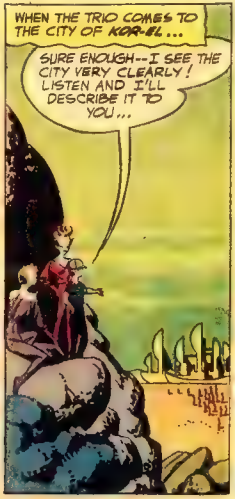

THEN TO THEIR GREAT SURPRISE...
LOOK--HE'S STILL ALIVE! HE'S WALKING TOWARD US!
BUT HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? WE SAW HIM DESTROYED! JUST AS WAS, MOMMOLEK!
THEN MOMMOLEK WAS FOOLING YOU! BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU THE POWER PLANT IS STILL THERE!
IF MOMMOLEK DIDN'T REALLY DISAPPEAR, THEN HE MUST HAVE PUT A MENTAL SPELL OVER US! BILLY--GO BACK INSIDE AND TURN ON THE POWER WHILE WE CONCENTRATE HARD AND SEE IF WE CAN SEE THE POWER PLANT, TOO!


BENDING THEIR GREAT MENTAL POWERS TO THE TASK, KIA AND ARETRION SOON MANAGE TO BRING INTO VIEW THE VAGUE OUT-LINE OF...
THE POWER PLANT--I SEE IT!
MOMMOLEK MUST BE THE ONE WHO'S DOING THIS TO US-- FOR SOME MYSTERIOUS REASON OF HIS OWN! WE'LL TELL EVERYONE ON KOR-AM ABOUT BILLY'S DISCOVERY-- THAT MOMMOLEK IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR IMAGINARY DOOMS!

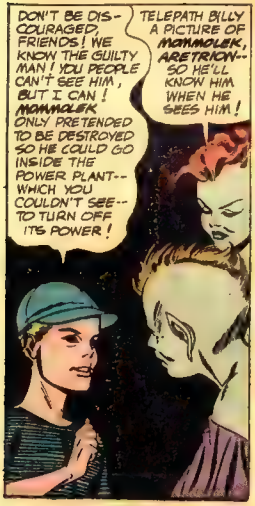

YOUNG BILLY ANDREWS HAS OTHER IDEAS, HOW-EVER! AFTER SHUTTING OFF THE POWER SO AS NOT TO ALERT MOMMOLEK...
YOU BETTER NOT TELL ANYBODY ANYTHING--IF YOU WANT TO CATCH MOMMOLEK! IF YOU BROADCAST THIS NEWS, YOU'LL ALARM HIM AND HE MAY TRY TO DO AWAY WITH ME! I'M THE ONLY ONE ON YOUR WORLD WHO CAN SEE AND FIND HIM!

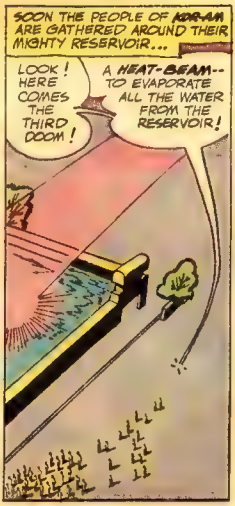
MY EARTH-MIND WASN'T AFFECTED BY THE MENTAL SUGGESTION WHICH CAUSED YOU TO "SEE" WHAT NEVER HAPPENED! SINCE MOMMOLEK TOLD YOU ALL TO WATCH HIS "DOOMS"-- I THINK HE NEEDED YOUR COMBINED MIND POWER TO ACCOMPLISH HIS TRICK!

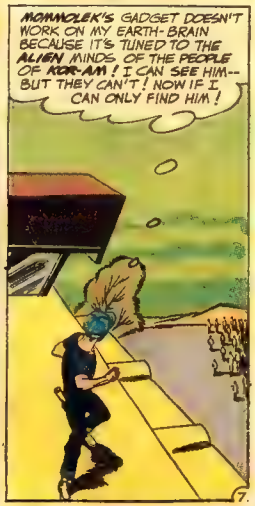
MOMMOLEK PLANTED HIS IDEA ON YOU VOCALLY! MAYBE HE HAS A GIMMICK WHICH--TOGETHER WITH THE MIND POWER OF THE PEOPLE WATCHING--MAKES THEM SEE WHATEVER HE SUGGESTS! ON MY WORLD, HINDU FAKIRS USE THIS SAME MASS HALLUCINATION TO WORK THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK!

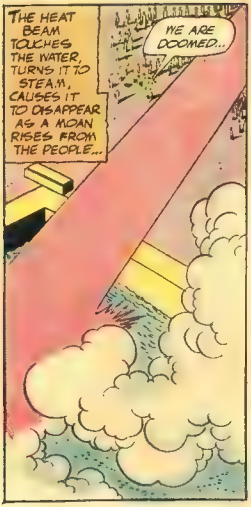

WHEN THE TRIO COMES TO THE CITY OF KOR-EL...
SURE ENOUGH--I SEE THE CITY VERY CLEARLY! LISTEN AND I'LL DESCRIBE IT TO YOU...

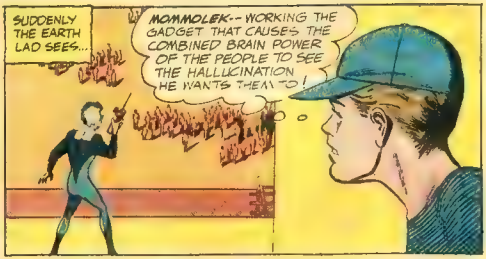
AS HE FINISHES, ANOTHER VOICE SPEAKS...
PEOPLE OF KOR-AM! THE FINAL DOOM WILL OCCUR TODAY AT SUNSET! YOUR WATER RESERVOIR WILL BE COMPLETELY DRAINED OF WATER! WITHOUT WATER, YOU MUST DIG WELLS OR PERISH...
OH! WE HAVE SO FEW HAND-TOOLS TO DIG WELLS--


DON'T BE DISCOURAGED, FRIENDS! WE KNOW THE GUILTY MAN! YOU PEOPLE CAN'T SEE HIM, BUT I CAN! MOMMOLEK ONLY PRETENDED TO BE DESTROYED SO HE COULD GO INSIDE THE POWER PLANT--WHICH YOU COULDN'T SEE--TO TURN OFF ITS POWER!
TELEPATH BILLY A PICTURE OF MOMMOLEK, ARETRION--SO HE'LL KNOW HIM WHEN HE SEES HIM!


SOON THE PEOPLE OF KOR-AM ARE GATHERED AROUND THEIR MIGHTY RESERVOIR...
LOOK! HERE COMES THE THIRD DOOM!
A HEAT-BEAM--TO EVAPORATE ALL THE WATER FROM THE RESERVOIR!

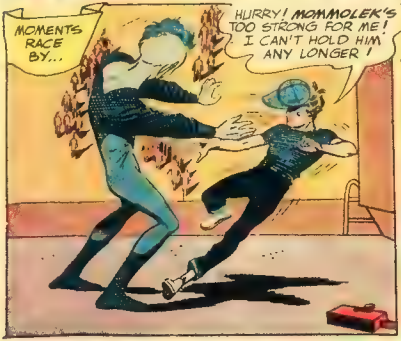

MOMMOLEK'S GADGET DOESN'T WORK ON MY EARTH-BRAIN BECAUSE IT'S TUNED TO THE ALIEN MINDS OF THE PEOPLE OF KOR-AM! I CAN SEE HIM--BUT THEY CAN'T! NOW IF I CAN ONLY FIND HIM!


THE HEAT BEAM TOUCHES THE WATER, TURNS IT TO STEAM, CAUSES IT TO DISAPPEAR AS A MOAN RISES FROM THE PEOPLE...
WE ARE DOOMED...


SUDDENLY THE EARTH LAD SEES...
MOMMOLEK--WORKING THE GADGET THAT CAUSES THE COMBINED BRAIN POWER OF THE PEOPLE TO SEE THE HALLUCINATION HE WANTS THEM TO!

BILLY LEAPS FORWARD, GRABS MOMMOLEK...
HUH? WHAT--?
QUICKLY, KIA! ARETRION--TELL EVERYBODY TO CONCENTRATE WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT! IT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN GET THEM TO SEE MOMMOLEK!

AS BILLY SHOUTS, ARETRION BROADCASTS THE TRUTH TO HIS PEOPLE...
CONCENTRATE! TELL YOUR MINDS MOMMOLEK THE TRAITOR IS IN OUR MIDST AND YOU'LL SEE HIM!


MOMENTS RACE BY...
HURRY! MOMMOLEK'S TOO STRONG FOR ME! I CAN'T HOLD HIM ANY LONGER!

THEN, SECONDS BEFORE MOMMOLEK CAN RECOVER HIS HALLUCINATOR...
I SEE HIM!
WE SEE HIM, TOO! WE'LL HELP YOU!

WHEN MOMMOLOK IS CAPTURED, HE EXPLAINS...

I HOPED BY REDUCING YOU ALL TO A PRIMITIVE EXISTENCE, THAT I ALONE WOULD LIVE IN KOR-EL CITY AND USE THE POWER FROM THE ENERGI-PLANT AND DRINK THE WATER FROM THE RESERVOIR...

I WOULD BE ALL-POWERFUL! I WOULD BE THE COMPLETE MASTER OF KOR-AM--AND I WOULD HAVE BEEN, TOO--IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE EARTH BOY!

YOU ARE A HERO, BILLY! A GREAT HERO!

GOSH, JUST LIKE THE HEROES IN THE STORIES I READ--I'M REWARDED WITH A KISS FROM A BEAUTIFUL GIRL!

BUT WHEN BILLY HAS BEEN RETURNED TO EARTH AND TELLS HIS YOUNG FRIENDS ABOUT HIS "STRANGE ADVENTURE"...

AW, YOU READ THAT STORY IN SOME COMIC AND ONLY IMAGINED YOU WERE THE HERO!

YEAH! IT'S JUST ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THAT VIVID IMAGINATION OF YOURS, BILLY!

IT'S A LUCKY THING FOR KOR-AM AND ITS PEOPLE I DO HAVE A VIVID IMAGINATION--OR I'D NEVER HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT TO SAVE THEM FROM THE IMAGINARY DOOMS!

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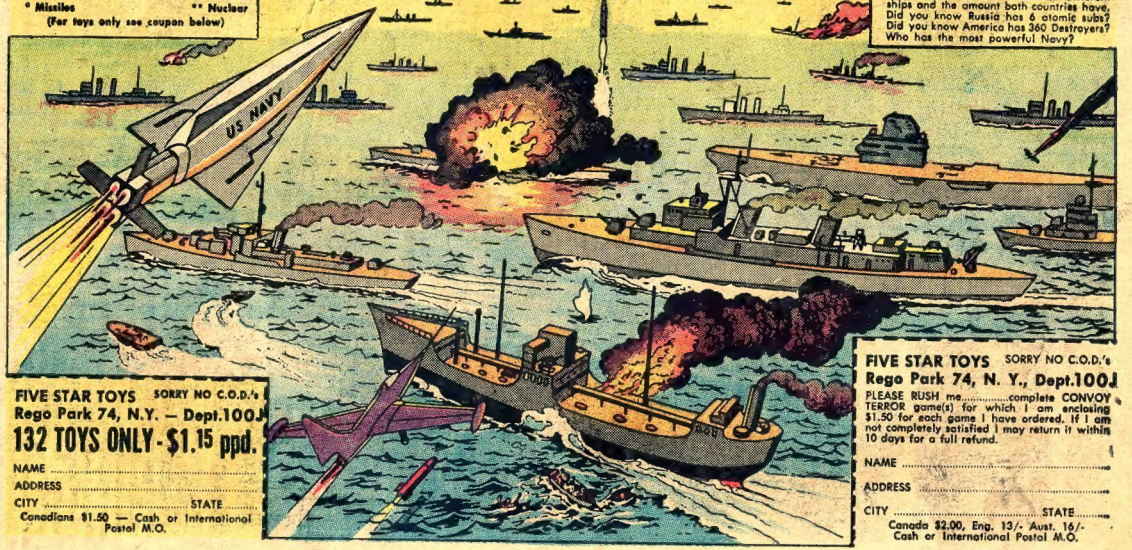

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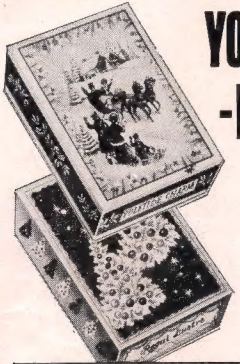

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